

REMARKS

This Amendment is responsive to the Office Action mailed on March 24, 2005. Claims 1, 4, and 5 are cancelled. Claims 9, 10, 14-16, and 18 are amended. New claims 24-33 are added. Claims 6, and 8-34 are pending.

The Examiner has indicated that claims 6, 8, 11-13 and 17 are allowed. The Examiner has also indicated that claim 10 contains allowable subject matter.

Claims 1, 4, 5, 9, 14-16 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Konno (US 5,293,438).

Claims 19-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Konno in view of Conde (US 6,453,090).

Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections in view of the amended claims and the following comments.

Discussion of Amended Claims

Claims 1, 4, and 5 are cancelled. Claims 9, 14, 16, and 18 are amended to depend from allowed claim 6. Claim 15 is amended to correct an error in the original claim.

Claim 10, which contains allowable subject matter, has been amended into independent form.

New claims 24-33 correspond to original claims 9, 14-16, and 18-23, modified to correspond to independent allowed claim 11 from which they depend

Accordingly, all the pending claims are in condition for immediate allowance.

Further remarks regarding the asserted relationship between Applicants' claims and the prior art are not deemed necessary, in view of the amended claims and the foregoing discussion. Applicants' silence as to any of the Examiner's comments is not indicative of an acquiescence to the stated grounds of rejection.

Withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is therefore respectfully requested.

Conclusion

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider this application, allow each of the pending claims and to pass this application on to an early issue. If there are any remaining issues that need to be addressed in order to place this application into condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to telephone Applicants' undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



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